

## 2010: year of legends

Geoff Shearer  
TV AND FILM EDITOR

**S**HEATHE your pirate sword Mr Depp, put your fangs in a glass of water beside the bed Mr Pattinson – the latest film trend involves sword clashes and bad teeth that go much further back into mythology.

Greece is the word. Well, sort of that neck of the woods at least.

Out of Hollywood this year expect big box office action for Jerry Bruckheimer's *Prince of Persia* with Jake Gyllenhaal, and the *Clash of the Titans* remake with Sam Worthington, while the Greek gods mash-up *Percy Jackson And the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* opens in cinemas this Thursday.

Titles in development in the US include *Jason and the Argonauts: The Kingdom of Hades* and *Odysseus*, while director Adam Shankman (*Hairspray*, *Bedtime Stories*) is toying around with a *Sinbad* remake.

However, Shankman – who also is a guest judge on *So You Think You Can Dance (US)* – has been beaten out of the boxes already by southeast Queensland-based production company Limelight International.

Its latest project *Sinbad and the Minotaur* went into principal production here last week.

The epic fantasy is being filmed at locations around Brisbane and the Gold Coast as well as at Limelight's recently purchased 1000sq m soundstage and studio facilities at Loganholme.

More than 100 Queensland cast and crew will work on the film, according to the company.

Australian action star Manu Bennett (*30 Days of Night*, *Lantana*) and Sam Raimi's new TV series *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* has the lead role as Sinbad and is joined by ex-*Home And Away* star Holly



**SWORDS AND SANDALS:** Jake Gyllenhaal and Gemma Arterton all frocked up in *Prince of Persia*.

Brisley and Steven Grives (*Paradise Road*, *Scooby-Doo*).

Producer Dale Bradley says the film revamps the Sinbad legend along the same lines as the recent Robert Downey Jr and Jude Law makeover of *Sherlock Holmes*.

"We took the familiar elements of Sinbad – his bravery and his sense of adventure – and basically built a roller-coaster ride of a film around him," Bradley says.

"There's this sly humour in the script," he says.

"The sets and costumes have a bold, modern edge and our computer-generated minotaur is

more Arabian Nightmare than *Arabian Nights*."

Bennett has spent pre-production mastering Sinbad's unique fighting style, drawing on a mix of Chinese sword choreography, stick fighting, European rapier and bar-room brawling.

"The idea is that Sinbad, as a sailor, will have picked up bits and pieces of different fighting styles in his travels," Bennett says.

"There's so much action in the script, it's going to be a very physical shoot. We're all expecting to cop a few knocks along the way but that's all part of the fun."

The biggest knock, it seems, could be to the pirate and vampire franchises that up until now have stalked the cinema screens.

Word from the set of *Clash of the Titans* is that a sequel is already being talked about, while *Percy Jackson* director Chris Columbus just can't contain his excitement for the genre.

"The world of Greek myth really hasn't been dealt with on screen in a long time – at least not in terms of a big blockbuster motion picture," Columbus told the *Los Angeles Times* last month.

"It's exciting to think about. At least it is for me."

## Unlocking puzzle of the past

LOUIS Nowra described his play as "a ghost story," and it is, but not in the supernatural sense. Three half-sisters, reunited in north Queensland for their mother's funeral, are all haunted by their relationships with her, and each carries pieces of a puzzle that will be shared to reveal the secrets of their pasts. What emerges, after a long night and in the radiance of a new dawn, is a tale of neglect and sexual abuse caused by the exploitation of Aboriginal women by predatory white males.

While the emotional resonance rings true, the play contains one banal glitch that undermines its credibility. It's absurd to have the sisters returning from their mother's funeral service already in possession of her ashes (around which much will revolve). Was that flaw in the original script or has it occurred in this production?

Director Jo Peirce has assembled three young indigenous performers to play the sisters. Georgia McBride-Levi is Mae, who nursed their mother as she sank into dementia. Louvel Yapali-Purcival is the wild and feckless young Nona. Josifini



**SISTERHOOD:** *Radiance* explores one family's secrets as three half-sisters gather to bury their mother.

### CURTAIN UP

#### *Radiance*

By Louis Nowra  
Where: Arts Theatre  
Until March 6  
Reviewed by Sue Gough

Hawkins is Cressy, whose vocal talents have allowed her to escape overseas to an operatic career. None have had the usual long supporting

role apprenticeships that might have better prepared them for the demands of this play and it shows in a kind of 'effortfulness', a beavering away at acting rather than being able to manifest their characters naturally. Too often they are allowed to fall back on that last resort of an actor's craft: shouting. That said, they had improved so much by the end of the act that it is obvious they are talented and fast learners.

*Radiance* takes Arts Theatre back into the realm of good amateur productions.



Laura Stead

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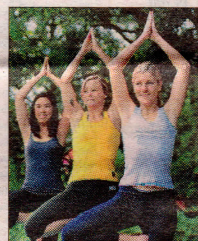
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